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Health & Fitness

In the Beginning - A Gnostic's Take on the Genesis Creation Stories

V, Neighbor

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There are two creation stories in the Bible. The first one (Genesis 1) describes the Lord God as creating the universe, the earth, and everything in it and on it in six days. He created male and female in his own image and told them to increase in number and rule over every other living thing.

The second creation story (Genesis 2) is the story of Adam and Eve. That story begins with an already-created barren misty earth out which God formed a man (Adam). Next, God planted the Garden of Eden which contained the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Then He created the animals and a woman (Eve) from Adam's rib.

Assuming that everyone understands that creation stories are intended as mythical truth rather than literal truth, Gnostics generally agree with the first story in that man and woman were created equally and at the same time. Balance and integration of male and female is a theme that runs throughout Gnostic thought. It's a yin-yang kind of thing.

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Gnostics would also point out that the "Lord God" referred to in both stories isn't really God, but a lesser supernatural being that formed from emanations of God. This lesser being then drifted from his (for lack of a personal word for "its") original source, started to think he was "all that", and created our world so he could have something to master over. Mistakes were made and we ended up with an imperfect world with imperfect inhabitants including us imperfect humans.

Keep in mind that we're talking about myth. Our conscious minds know that the myth isn't true, that it's illogical, and so on. But myth communicates with our subconscious which then shapes our conscious thought – mostly without us realizing it.

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For example, the myth of God taking a rib from Adam to create Eve is an enthralling story. We easily form mental images of it. The oldest evolutionary part of our brain was developed before humans were capable of language. So those images go right to the core of our being and really stick with us. Anyone who's heard or read the Genesis 2 creation story is sure to remember what part of Adam God used to create Eve.

The point is that although it may seem silly to discuss the validity of creation story #1 vs. creation story #2, or the Gnostic version vs. the orthodox version, it's actually extremely relevant to everything we do or think. Imagine a swirling whirlpool of dust rising from the earth and slowly separating into two creatures, a man and a woman, standing side by side holding hands. Next, imagine a sleeping Adam alone in Eden, then a rib being drawn from his body, and finally a woman forming out of that rib. Now look at someone from the opposite sex. He or she seems to be a slightly different person depending upon which image is dominant in your mind.

The same is true if you look in the mirror while thinking of yourself as being created in the image of an all-knowing all-powerful Supreme God. Then think of the world as created by a

mistake-prone immature lesser "god". On one hand you might think that you're a truly amazing creature. On the other, you might by annoyed by the pimple on your nose.

My next blog post will focus on Genesis 3 ("The Fall") and the very different view Gnostics have of the serpent's advice to Eve.

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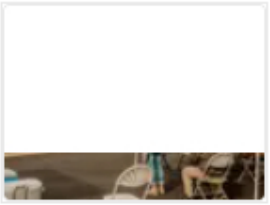

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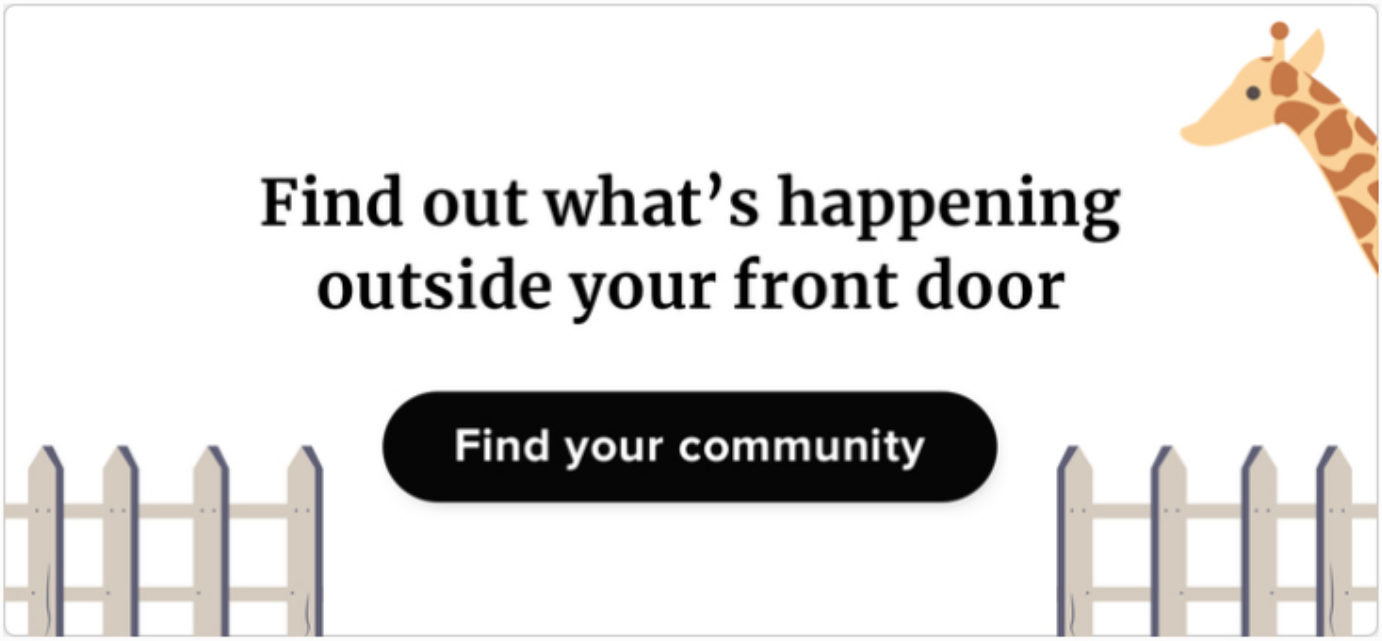

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